操场角落，我们看蚂蚁拆一只蜻蜓

体育课解散以后，刘小满在操场角落喊了一声，我们全跑过去了。那里躺着一只死去的蜻蜓，翅膀摊在地上，一群蚂蚁已经把它围住了。

我们蹲成一圈，谁也不说话。先是几只蚂蚁在蜻蜓的腰上咬，咬下一小块，叼着往回走。接着更多的蚂蚁来了，排成两条线，一条通向花坛，一条从花坛回来，像两条细细的黑辫子。

有人伸手想去帮忙，被刘小满一把拉住。他说，别碰，咱们就看着。后来我们给自己定了三条规矩：不出声，不碰它们，不挡在它们的路中间。我们就那么蹲着，看蚂蚁把蜻蜓一块一块拆下来，翅膀、身子、尾巴，分成一小片一小片搬走。

一片翅膀太重，六只蚂蚁围上去，有的拽前边，有的拖后边，翅膀在地上划出一道弧线。它们绕开了一个鞋印，鞋印里积着昨夜的雨水。我盯着那道弧线看了很久，它绕得那么自然，像早就商量好的。

下课铃响了，我们没人走。体育老师走过来问看什么，我们齐声说看蚂蚁拆蜻蜓。老师也蹲下来看了一会儿，说别打扰它们。于是全班一半人都蹲在那个角落，安安静静的，连平时最爱喊的张大力都没出声。

蜻蜓最后只剩下一点点，蚂蚁也散了。我们站起来，腿都麻了，互相搀着往教室走。那一节课间，我们谁也没玩，可谁都没觉得浪费。

我从前做观察日记，写三行就烦了，觉得蚂蚁有什么可看的。那天我明白了，看得久才看得见。蹲下去不出声的那二十分钟，蚂蚁把一整个世界的规矩演给我们看了：怎么分工，怎么绕路，怎么把大的东西变成小的搬回家。

后来我写观察日记，不再写三行就合上本子。我学会了对着一只小虫子蹲够二十分钟，学会把手放在膝盖上不动，学会在腿麻的时候先咬咬牙再站起来。那只蜻蜓早就没有了，可那两条黑辫子一样的蚂蚁线，我一直记着。原来耐心不是坐着等，是蹲在那里，眼睛一直亮着。

At the Corner of the Playground, We Watched the Ants Take Apart a Dragonfly

After PE class was dismissed, Liu Xiaoman shouted from the corner of the playground, and we all ran over. A dead dragonfly lay there with its wings spread on the ground, and a group of ants had already surrounded it.

We squatted in a circle, nobody speaking. First a few ants bit at the waist of the dragonfly, tore off a small piece, and carried it back. Then more ants came and formed two lines, one going to the flowerbed and one coming back, like two thin black braids.

Someone reached out to help, and Liu Xiaoman grabbed his hand. He said, do not

touch, just watch. Then we made three rules for ourselves: no noise, no touching, no standing in their road. We squatted there and watched the ants take the dragonfly apart piece by piece, wings, body, tail, each small part carried away.

One wing was too heavy. Six ants gathered around it, some pulling the front, some dragging the back, and the wing drew an arc on the ground. They went around a shoe print filled with the rain from the night before. I stared at that arc for a long time. It turned so naturally, as if they had agreed on it long ago.

The bell rang for the end of the break, and nobody left. Our PE teacher came over and asked what we were watching, and we answered together that we were watching ants take apart a dragonfly. The teacher squatted down and watched for a while, then said, do not disturb them. So half the class squatted in that corner, perfectly quiet, even Zhang Dali who always shouted the loudest made no sound.

In the end only a speck of the dragonfly was left, and the ants scattered too. We stood up with numb legs and held each other on the way back to the classroom. We had not played during that whole break, yet not one of us felt it was wasted.

I used to write my observation diary for three lines and then close the book, thinking there was nothing to see in ants. That day I understood that only those who watch long enough really see. In those twenty silent squatting minutes, the ants acted out the rules of a whole world for us: how to divide work, how to go around, how to turn a big thing into small pieces and carry it home.

Later, when I wrote my observation diary, I no longer closed the book after three lines. I learned to squat in front of a tiny insect for a full twenty minutes, to keep my hands still on my knees, and to grit my teeth before standing up when my legs went numb. The dragonfly was gone long ago, but I still remember those two ant lines like black braids. Patience, it turns out, is not sitting and waiting; it is squatting there with your eyes bright the whole time.